



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

## WOMAN SUFFRAGE AN AID TO SOCIAL REFORM

---

BY MRS. FREDERICK NATHAN,  
Vice-President National Consumers' League, and President Consumers'  
League of the City of New York.

---

After hearing the interesting addresses of those upon the evening's program, it seems superfluous for me to add a jot of testimony. Yet, I appreciate your kindness in expressing a desire to have a few words from me, and, with your permission, I shall relate one or two personal experiences:

I have, as you doubtless know, worked for many years in connection with the Consumers' League, in endeavoring to secure protective legislation for working girls and children. Year after year I have gone to Albany to plead for shorter hours or for restriction of night work, or for stricter supervision of dangerous machinery, left unguarded. Each year the fact is borne in upon me with greater and greater force that we women would not find it so difficult to secure legislation, were we the constituents of the legislators. For the legislators point out to us time and again that they are pledged to support the wishes of their constituents. I have noticed that the *direct influence* of the few merchants and manufacturers who oppose our measures has apparently much more weight with them than the *indirect influence* of the thousands of women interested in having the measures passed.

To give you one instance of this difference between direct influence and indirect influence, let me relate what happened last year when we tried to get the labor laws amended. We asked whether it would be possible to have a joint hearing of the bill before the Senate and Assembly committees, in order to be relieved of the necessity of going to Albany on two different occasions; we were told politely, but firmly, that it would be out of the question, that we would be obliged to attend the Assembly committee hearing on one day and the Senate committee hearing on another day later on. So several of us journeyed to Albany on the day fixed for the hearing before the Assembly committee, only to be told after reaching the Capitol, that the hearing had been postponed for one week.

We asked why we had not been notified, and we were told that there had been no time to notify us. We ascertained later, however, that the postponement had been arranged the evening before, (therefore a telegram or telephone message would have reached us) and had been due to the fact that one of the merchants opposing our measure had requested by telephone a joint hearing before the two committees, in order to be spared the necessity of making two trips to Albany!

His request, which was identical with ours, was acceded to at once. Therefore, we women of the Consumers' League were compelled to make two journeys, at double the expense, not only of transportation, but also of energy and time, merely because the indirect influence of the non-voter is not as efficacious as the direct influence of the voter. Moreover, when we finally presented ourselves at the Capitol for the joint hearing, which had been fixed for two p. m., we were compelled to wait more than three hours, and were then limited to twenty minutes to each side. A hearing on another bill was given precedence, without any time limit having been fixed. When I ingenuously asked for an explanation, I was told by one of the committee that the bill in question was a very important one, as the speakers represented a large number of *voters*. The bill was in reference to a demand on the part of Spanish-American War veterans to be excused from Civil Service examinations.

As the opponents of all bills are heard first, the merchants who opposed our measure were heard shortly after five o'clock, and as they took more than their allotted time, it was nearly the hour of adjournment, according to the statement of the chairman, before we were able to present our side of the case. Hence only the most hurried and insufficient presentation was allowed us.

On one occasion last year, when I was visiting the night court, there were twenty young women who had been arrested, brought before the magistrate. They were kept standing, crowded together in the room adjoining the court, and I noticed policemen and reporters jostling by them, staring at them, and occasionally addressing them. They had been arrested because they had been found presumably drinking, sitting in the back room of a saloon which had been raided. I asked where their male escorts were, for I felt sure the occupants of the room had not all been of the feminine

sex. I was told that all the men had escaped. I was inclined to marvel at their unanimous agility until it was explained to me that men with political pulls were sometimes permitted to escape.

Only recently when my friend, Miss Inez Milholland, was arrested for having lingered on the street to watch the picketing during the shirt-waist strike, she was held on charges, while her escort, Lieutenant Tawney, who had done no less than she had, was dismissed at once. The shirt-waist strikers, the majority of them frail young girls, were fined far more heavily and punished far more severely than were the striking taxi-cab chauffeurs of a year ago, although the latter committed much more violence and of a far more serious nature.

In view of these facts, is it strange that many women feel that if they had the same political status as men, much of this flagrant injustice would cease?

Now just a word in reference to a statement made by Mrs. Gilbert Jones. If you will examine the labor laws of the different states, and the laws regarding equal pay for equal work, you will find that the four states in which women are enfranchised have the best laws for the protection of women and children of any four states in the Union.